

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Office Action notes that claims 1-14 are pending in the application. No amendments to the claims are made in this Response and no new claims are added. Therefore, claims 1-14 are still pending in the application.

In the Office Action, the Examiner: (1) objected to the Abstract; and (2) rejected claims 1-14 under 35 USC §103(a). Applicant responds to the Examiner's objection and rejections below.

Objection to the Abstract

The Examiner objected to the Abstract because it is too long. Applicant has amended the Abstract so that it is less than 150 words or 15 lines in length.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC §103

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, 4-8, and 10-14 under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over US Patent 6,931,811 (Thiers) in view of US Patent 6,493,472 (Takagi). Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1, 2, 4-8, and 10-14 are patentable over Thiers in view of Takagi.

As for claim 1, neither Thiers nor Takagi discuss or suggest "creating a digital layout using all of the plurality of sections" as recited in claim 1. In Thiers, a printed decorative layer is secured to a sheet of base material and the base layer with the image secured thereon is then sawed into flooring planks (*see* column 6, lines 47-56). There is no discussion or suggestion in Thiers of segmenting a digital image into sections and creating a digital layout using all of the sections. In addition, Takagi does not discuss or suggest "creating a digital layout using all of the plurality of sections" at all. Therefore, even if such a combination as Thiers and Takagi were made, which applicant does not concede is proper, the purported combination still would not

disclose all of the elements recited in claim 1. For these reasons, applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 is patentable over Thiers in view of Takagi.

Claims 2 and 4-6 depend from claim 1, therefore, for the reasons stated above, applicant respectfully submits that these claims are also patentable over Thiers in view of Takagi.

As for claim 7, neither Thiers nor Takagi discuss or suggest “creating a digital layout using all of the plurality of sections”, “securing the printed digital layout to a sheet of base material”, or “assembling the plurality of flooring planks in a predetermined order and alignment to reproduce the digital image on the laminate floor” as recited in claim 7.

First, as discussed above, there is no discussion or suggestion in Thiers or Takagi of segmenting a digital image into sections and creating a digital layout using all of the sections.

Second, there is no discussion or suggestion in Thiers or Takagi of securing a printed digital layout to a sheet of base material. As discussed above, in Thiers the decorative image is secured to the base material, not a digital layout that was created from sections of the decorative image. In addition, Takagi is directed to sheet and information processing apparatus and has nothing to do with securing anything to a base material.

Third, there is no discussion or suggestion in Thiers or Takagi of assembling flooring planks in a predetermined order and alignment to reproduce the original digital image. In Thiers, while there is mention of using flooring planks having a wood grain pattern to assemble a floor (the way any laminate floor is assembled), there is no discussion or suggestion of assembling the flooring planks in a predetermined order and alignment to reproduce an image on the laminate floor. In addition, as mentioned above, Takagi is directed to sheet and information processing apparatus and has nothing to do with the assembly of laminate floors.

For these reasons, applicant respectfully submits that claim 7 is patentable over Thiers in view of Takagi.

Claims 8 and 10-14 depend from claim 7, therefore, for the reasons stated above, these claims are also patentable over Thiers in view of Takagi.

The Examiner also rejected claims 3 and 9 under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over US Patent 6,931,811 (Thiers) in view of US Patent 6,493,472 (Takagi) and further in view of US Patent 4,586,714 (Lenkoff). Applicant respectfully submits that claims 3 and 9 are patentable over Thiers in view of Takagi and further in view of Lenkoff.

Claim 3 depends from claim 1. As discussed above for claim 1, neither Thiers nor Takagi discuss or suggest “creating a digital layout using all of the plurality of sections” as recited in claim 1. In addition, Lenkoff does not suggest “creating a digital layout using all of the plurality of sections.” Lenkoff is directed to a puzzle in which an image is obtained and cut into geometric pieces, which are then used as the puzzle pieces that are manually reassembled as the puzzle. There is no discussion or suggestion of creating a digital layout using the geometric pieces in Lenkoff. Therefore, even if such a combination as Thiers, Takagi, and Lenkoff were made, which applicant does not concede is proper, the purported combination still would not disclose all of the elements recited in claim 3.

Claim 9 depends from claim 7. As discussed above for claim 7, neither Thiers nor Takagi discuss or suggest “creating a digital layout using all of the plurality of sections”, “securing the printed digital layout to a sheet of base material”, or “assembling the plurality of flooring planks in a predetermined order and alignment to reproduce the digital image on the laminate floor” as recited in claim 7. In addition, as discussed above, Lenkoff does not discuss or suggest “creating a digital layout using all of the plurality of sections.” Furthermore, Lenkoff is directed to a

puzzle game and has nothing to do with laminate floors and does not discuss or suggest "securing the printed digital layout to a sheet of base material" or "assembling the plurality of flooring planks in a predetermined order and alignment to reproduce the digital image on the laminate floor." Therefore, even if such a combination as Thiers, Takagi, and Lenkoff were made, which applicant does not concede is proper, the purported combination still would not disclose all of the elements recited in claim 9.

For these reasons, applicant respectfully submits that claims 3 and 9 are patentable over Thiers in view of Takagi and further in view of Lenkoff.

Conclusion

In view of the aforesaid, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-14 are in condition for allowance and a Notice of Allowance for these claims is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: 3/16/06

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